



August 20, 2016

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U.S. EPA
ATTN: Harbor Comments
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

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EPA-REGION 10

I know that the Willamette River has had pollution problems in the past, but homeowners have already paid for the sewage project. Now we hear that a new EPA project is planned which will place a major financial burden on all residents and businesses in the Portland area. We cannot be expected to constantly hand over our money to repeated projects, when none of them seem to have had the intended effect. In this case, we didn't even get to vote on the project; the EPA is making the decision to dredge the Willamette River, but locals will end up paying the price. If we had gotten a vote, I am certain the result would have been a resounding "no."

As a small business owner, I can tell you that this plan will harm individuals and the economy as a whole. I'm a partner at Barbo Machinery & Supply. We're a retailer for woodworking machinery, and the business has been in the Portland area since 1922. The owner is pretty much retired, and he sold the business to the employees. Today, there are six of us working here. If business taxes rise to fund this project, salaries will have to be cut. We do our best to project our budget out for two to three years, but that kind of hidden tax isn't good.

The big thing with this project is the cost. What are we getting for that cost? If this seemed like a smart use of money and a worthwhile project, it might get some support. People in this county have paid and paid and paid, yet we are still being told that the Willamette's polluted? Well, weren't other projects supposed to take care of that? A better use of the money would be on our infrastructure. The roads here are terrible and so are the bridges that go over the river.

The EPA is basing their plan on old information. That means we are being asked to help pay for a huge cleanup project that isn't even founded on current research. If the EPA had examined more recent research, it would have seen that the state of the river is actually much improved. A big dredging project could actually have the opposite of the intended effect, stirring up pollutants and exposing locals to toxins unnecessarily. And we are being asked to help pay for that? There has to be a different solution because we, the residents and businesses of Portland, absolutely cannot afford to pay more.

Sincerely,

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Partner